THE NEWS LETTER

OF THE COLLEGE ENGLISH ASSOCIATION

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e Coming Years

A Presidential Message

am glad to accept the honor of presidency of the Association, use I believe it is capable of dering an important service to giate education, especially in me of national crisis.

he crisis may be of long dur-n, or there may be a series of es, since the problems following war (whether America enters r not) are likely to prove at t as difficult as those of the war od itself.

we are to help the nation st itself, we shall first have to st ourselves. If we do this ly, we shall not abandon the nanently valid purposes to h we are dedicated, but bring into relation with the needs he time.

or a number of years it will ur responsibility to devise ways serving the national welfare in the limits of our subject. 1917 we were asked to exceed e limits by teaching, under the . T. C. of unblessed memory, subject known as War Issues, which we had no special com-nce. I suspect that this is not y to happen again. I think we l be free to find, on our own unt, more fundamental and opriate ways of service.

anted this freedom, can we it to advantage? Scarcely by ting our meetings to a me-e of papers, unrelated odd-ts of pedagogical thought, such A Plan for Enticing Students Reading, The Use of Maps in hing English and the Major, tive Writing for All, The Re-ch Paper, English as Sociology, to Teach Aesthetic Distance. topics smack business as l, and not always particularly ring business at that.

hatever our topics of discus-they should possess a large significant context agreed upon dvance and stated, perhaps, in rogative form. If business-sual were in order, many of members would doubtless pro-, as appropriate contexts, such tions as: What can teachers nglish do to give students a r understanding of English ature and literary history? t can they do to aid students ead poetry and prose intel-ntly? What can they do to are students for the practical of English after graduation? t can they do to prepare stu-s for the graduate school? t the context forced upon us y is the national crisis, which be met successfully, in the ion of the American people, by a renewal and deepening of faith in democracy. Accordingly our essential business, it would seem, is to attempt to answer the question opened up in one session of our last annual meeting: "What Can Teachers of English Do to Help Preserve the Democratic Tradition in America?"

There may be dozens of ways of answering this question—what are these ways? Those who do not like the question may complain that it tends to narrow our subject, that our job is rather to make English mean all it can to students as human beings: which is one way of answering the question, and a good way. Each answer is likely to be grandiose, requiring analysis into a set of more specific answers. And these more specific answers, when considered in relation to the materials of study and the method of teaching, would offer no end of topics for discussion.

If this procedure commends itself, it should be applied first, I think, to the English work of the first two years of college. The courses of these years, aside from the fact that they must somehow help the student to read and write better, are in their nature far more flexible than those of the senior college, though convention has given them a widely accepted pattern. The old-fashioned Freshman Composition with emphasis on the mechanics of writing and the old-fashioned Survey of English Literature with emphasis on the historical facts, if they were ever really adapted to our needs, will scarcely be suitable in the period we are entering. Here, in the program of these two years, is our greatest opportunity, as the public is well aware, for us to make a significant contribution.

While discussion of the work of the two years is in progress, a committee might well be engaged upon a fuller factual study of this work than has yet been made, determining the number of the different types of introductory courses and stating their aims, materials, and methods. Such a study might include a brief survey of the types of courses in say 1900 and again in 1920, as well as an extensive account for the year 1940. It might present a particularly detailed description of the courses in 1940 in a half dozen representative institutions. And it might summarize a number of new types of courses designed for the future, both from published sources and from contributions secured from members of the Association. Some such document, if thoroughly done and made available in print, should be highly valuable as a record and guide.

These are only suggestions. They constitute but one attempt to determine how our organization, formed in a time of inhumanities, might best set out to serve the humanities.

Norman Foerster.

"Free Association" in Modern Poetry

"Enlarged winds that curl the flood
Know no such liberty!"

In teaching contemporary literature, which, in spite of dissenting views, I continue to believe is a subject both significant and possible to teach, I have in recent years met, I confess, one difficulty inherent in some of the subject matter. I do not refer to the fact that contemporary authors have not yet settled into their final place. It is not necessary for the teacher to make on them a final judgment. And unless one has an uneasy pride of opinion, it is not so very painful to admit that one's estimate was wrong. Probably one ought to revise his literary judgments once or twice in a decade. Neither is it true that the literature of the past is more important; not if one looks at literature as a continuous record of thought rather than as the expression of individual great minds. And surely, since those students who read at all are likely to read much current literature, there is some point in helping them to read it more intelligently.

None of these is the difficulty to which I refer. It is rather the growth among recent authors of a specialized medium of expression which tends to conceal rather than reveal their meaning, the development of what Mr. Eastman termed the "cult of unintelligibility." Especially, the use, or misuse, of the principle of free association in poetry seems to stand as a barrier between the student and the author's mind. Now the worst thing about free association of ideas as a method of expression is that the association is free; that is, quite unhampered, free to run in one direction in one mind, and in quite another direction in another.

In attempting recently to define this method of writing to a class, I was impelled to illustrate it by vivisecting some lines of my own.

Many readers of recent verse will recall E. B. White's amusing poem "I Paint What I See," in which he satirizes the controversy between Rivera and Nelson Rockefeller over the inclusion of Lenin in the Rockefeller Building frescoes. Rivera's assertion is

> "I'll take out a couple of people drinkin'
> And put in a picture of Abraham Lincoln;
> I could even give you McCormick's reaper
> And still not make my art much cheaper;
> But the head of Lenin has got to stay."

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They Also Serve

For a long time, I have awaited a defense of literary history in the pages of the *News Letter* until I am forced to see this defense inadequately presented by myself. The champions of "Criticism" have written their expositions so that they could be read as arguments, and have arranged their arguments so as to convince my students of the errors of my ways historical. This is therefore a defense of myself, as well as my subject.

The best defense of literary history is an understanding of history proper. History—which may be denned as the inter-related facts of the past—is a limit towards which human knowledges advance, but at which no single discipline may ever hope to arrive. We discover the past not through a series of political, economic, or social events therein, and not through the collection of our predecessors' attempts at philosophical and artistic expression; but through all these things—taken simultaneously and exhaustively—we come within sight of History. With this understanding of History it is apparent that not only the battles man has fought, but also the songs he has sung, are important clues to the understanding of him. Whether the song or the battle is more important, I should not dare to suggest, I only say that an attempt to understand man without listening to the "ideas, feelings, views, reasonings, and other operations of the human mind" is to attempt the ludicrously impossible. Literary history (or to give it its other name, 'Philology') contributes facts necessary to an understanding of man. As such, it justifies itself.

Out of the welter of the past, the historian assembles the details from which he abstracts the essential 'humanity' of the moving forces which have shaped or destroyed mankind. From the confusion of infinite singularities he evokes a series of essential symbols which reveal the past, explain the present, and make the future less terrifying. History enables us to see "what a piece of work is a man!", and that sight should make us tolerant and courageous.

Surely the critics of philology would not have us abandon wells of tolerance and courage today. It may be that the interpretation of literature by a competent Critic acting in a timeless, spaceless vacuum helps us to understand humankind, but even granting this find no reasons for suppressing other channels of information. At least it is unbrotherly to abandon a philologist to exterior darkness merely because he prefers to consider the effect of Shelley on the nineteenth century rather than to autobiographically discuss the ef-

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Editorial

Forms and definitions in literature are a great comfort to the teacher. Every time a pattern breaks down, literature teachers suffer. It is so much easier to "teach the short story" if creators and critics and readers can agree as to just what a short story is, and what it is not. Katherine Mansfield, for instance, owes an apology to all of our tribe for helping to scramble our definitions.

"The perfect novel" was a boon to critics and pedagogs. If a novelist did not conform to pattern we knew that he had written a bad novel, no matter how much we enjoyed it; and we could explain to the young just why it was bad. But then along may come Miss Willa Cather and borrow a sonata pattern from the musicians, or a notion as to form from a school of Dutch painters.

The trouble with creative artists is that they take so much satisfaction in abandoning precedent and upsetting standards and destroying definitions. Some of us like to think that this is a modernistic sort of behavior; that it is the modern writer who suddenly has developed a strong impulse toward non-conformity, and we reproach him in our hearts for making teaching more difficult. But, unless we are mistaken, Petrarch, several hundred years ago, formulated a poetic pattern of fourteen lines in two sections with a fixed rhyme scheme so intricately arranged that the entire lyric form was closely knit and strangely charming. He called it a sonnet, and the work of his imitators could be tested by the pattern that he had set. Then along came Shakespeare with a supreme disregard for established precedent, used the fourteen lines, and sometimes the division of thought, and displayed a complete indifference to the rhyme scheme, ending, in fact, with a cheap little couplet, and then had the temerity to call the thing a sonnet. Charles Lamb, as you remember, was so indigant that he never would apply that hallowed term to Shakespeare's songs, but called them "fourteeners."

A few centuries after Petrarch, when the small world of literate people was accustomed to the didactic prose of churchmen and philosophers who set down revealed truth that admitted of no controversy, a whimsical old fellow had the temerity to publish a book which made no pretense of final knowledge on any subject. "If you want to know something," said Montaigne, "do not read my book, because I do not known anything; but if you enjoy discovering what I think about things in general and in particular, then you may enjoy this book, for I have essayed here to set down my observations."

So the definition of an essay was set for a time. It made no pretense of final authority; it used an unconventional style or "talking mode" of writing, and any material borrowed from other sources was set down not by rote, but only after it had passed through the digestive processes of the writer's mind. "Essay" was a good name, and the literate world was well content with it. Then along came such ponderous persons as Macaulay and Ruskin and Carlyle whose thoughts on any one subject generally demanded at least one packed volume, and sometimes several volumes. Anything smaller than a book called for an apology, and how apologize more subtly than to call each undersized volume an essay? And now comes Mr. John Buchan who calls his voluminous autobiography "an essay in recollection."

What is the poor teacher to do? There is no closer kinship between a Montaigne essay and one by Carlyle than there is between a lilting song of Herrick's and "Paradise Lost." But we must call them both essays because their authors did so, and then struggle to explain to students some imaginary kinship of form.

The scientists are much better off than are we literary arbiters. When they discover or create a slight variation from some earlier formula they give it a new name for convenience's sake. They do not say, "This is a new variety of chlorate or mangenate" but they say "This is perchlorate or permanganate." We do not dare invent new names for new forms because we are not ourselves the creators of those forms. If the creator was indolent enough to use an old name for something new we must meekly follow, and then strain our good sense trying to justify it to the young.

The "Minutes of the Iowa Colleges Conference on English," held at Drake University in October contain meaty material of interest to all college English teachers, and suggest to any interested reader that such regional conferences must intensify professional loyalty, and make for a higher standard of teaching throughout the region. It is pleasant to note that at the business meeting it was voted "to consider the desirability of affiliation with the College English Association which has purposes and interests similar to ours."

A plaintive cry goes out to our membership from both secretary and treasurer. We have an exceedingly simple business organization and it must remain simple until we have treasury enough to afford an office staff and all of the fixings. A stencil plate is made for each member as soon as he joins, and then there is no chance that any paper or communication sent out to all members will not be sent to him also. If it is not received, the fault lies with the mail en route or after arrival.

Members are increasingly asking that the "News Letter" be sent to the home rather than the college address. We are pleading against this tendency. Home addresses seem to change more often than business addresses; and every change of address means the throwing away of an old stencil and the manufacture of a new one.

Resolutions of the Executive Council of the Modern Language Association of America on What the High Schools ought to teach.

The Executive Council of the Modern Language Association of America at its session of December 28, 1940, considered a report submitted by a Special Committee of the National Youth Commission entitled *What the High School Ought to Teach*. The Council noted that this document was received by the Commission with "great approval of the major conclusions and recommendations," and that it has been widely distributed and publicized. It noted that the Special Committee was composed of five professors of education, three superintendents of urban school systems, and two other administrators, and included no representative of the great army of teachers engaged in instructing American youth in the humanistic branches of the curriculum; and further, that in its treatment of what it classifies as the "conventional subjects," the report sets forth an entirely inadquate and in some respects a distorted picture of the values of English and the foreign languages in preparation for life in a democratic society.

In view of these facts the Executive Council adopted the following resolutions:

RESOLVED: *first*, that the Council protests the implication in selecting the Special Committee that the program of the high schools should rest solely on the theories of teachers of education and administrators, and that teachers who represent curricular subjects of nan-professional and nonvocational content have no contribution to make;

Second, that the Council rejects the implication in statements of the report that more instruction in the so-called social studies is a better preparation for meeting the demands of a "wider social order" and the fulfillment of the obligations of American citizenship than the development of ability for clear and adequate expression in English or ability in the use of a foreign language;

Third, that the Council regards the statement of objectives and present practice in the teaching of English and the foreign languages as inadequate and misleading, especially in the failure to recognize the constant re-adaptation in the treatment of these subjects in step wih real progress in education;

Fourth that the Council, speaking for the more than 4,000 members of the Modern Language Association and other thousands of modern language teachers throughout the country, recognizes the necessity for constant changes in content and method in education in response to new needs and emergencies and offers its aid to the Youth Commission and all other agencies in carrying out these adaptations in such a manner as to preserve the humanistic elements in the curriculum. These it believes to be necessary to secure the spiritual freedom and happiness of the individual and to defend and perpetuate our national culture.

Fifth, that copies of these resolutions be sent to the President and the Secretary of the National Youth Commission and its sponsor the American Council on Education, to the members of the Special Committee, and to periodicals devoted to the teaching of English and the foreign languages.

They Also Serve

(Continued from Page One)

fect of Shelley on himself. The Critics interpose an objection there is more to their trade than autobiography. I grant this. Although criticism frequently becomes objectionable as it becomes objective, yet a common 'humanity' makes the reaction of any-man applicable in some way to every-man.

I realize that the goose-flesh critic, whose literary judgment is located in his spinal cord, is not a critic at all. I realize that the good critic makes use of the findings of the literary historian. But I insist that the activities of the Critic are not the only worthwhile activities. A philological Ph.D. does not constitutionally incapacitate one to teach English . . . though some members of the College English Association have expressed a contrary opinion. The good philologist is frequently the most understanding, appreciative, and sympathetic of critics despite tradition's having characterized him as interested in literature only for the sources and analogues. The bad teacher is a bad critic whether he teaches philology or criticism, and it is not his subject, that the Association should seek to reform.

Frank Sullivan,
St. Louis University

The Undergraduate Critic

To the Editor's question: Is it possible to train undergraduates in the art of criticism? my answer is Yes. I think it is not only possible to train them to do critical reading and writing: it is imperative that they be so trained. By criticism I do not mean the docile reception of fifth-hand opinions about this or that literary composition. I do mean that there is an elementary critical activity into which the undergraduate may be fittingly initiated. I may be a Flying Yorkshireman, but in my opinion almost all the undergraduate's work in English should be of this critical kind, objective in part, and subjective enough to be interesting as a body of language, spoken or written, and made for communication.

I had rather not use the word art, however, in talking about the work of the beginning critic, especially since the beginning critic I have in mind is a twenty-year-old American youth who has found the word art suspect in some of its occurrences in the language of his teachers. Instead of calling criticism an art (whereby it is likely to become an exalted and mysterious cultural phenomenon) I believe it is better to know it as the judicious exercise of intelligence and taste in matters of reading, writing, and talking. I believe that criticism rightly understood and practiced within a scope proper to the undergraduate is almost the only academic exercise he should be asked to engage in, as a student of English.

I am aware that the recommendation I have just made leaves out of the teaching of English what is known as theme-writing, but this omission is scarcely to be regretted, for surely the student of English composition and literature should not be asked to make anything less than a sensible communication of something he has known for a long time, or something he has come to understand through intellectual labor and the natural play of his feelings. Surely this young student should not be expected to put away his common sense when he becomes a college man studying the good subject English is, the first year, or second, or third, or fourth. Nevertheless it seems to me that he is being invited to do this stultifying thing when his college teacher of English requires him to produce for the day and hour a certain quantity of verbiage commonly known as a theme. It may be that an anecdote, an article, a commentary, an essay, a tale, or a poem, or any other name would be just as good and just as interesting, but I doubt it. Allow me to be downright enough to say that there isn't any sense in asking the beginning student of writing to compose a chapter of his autobiography before he has a chance to become conscious, or partially conscious, of what a writer does when he writes. Why not ask the beginning music student to compose as his first assignment the prelude of his childhood in Marengo County, or the fugue of his adolescent years up to the time of his entering college? Doubtless the composition of music is many things all in one; and among these many things is technique. The composition of English is a technique, too. It is many other things at the same time, but none of them is meaningful without the help of technique. English writing is a *how*, a lot of *hows*, as well as a *what*.

What then should the beginning student of writing be asked to compose? The answer is Nothing, provided the verb *compose* is understood to mean putting elements together creatively. Like the student of music, the student of English writing should learn to read and render the compositions of other writers before he undertakes to create compositions of his own. And what is the exact procedure of learning to read and render the compositions of other writers? I do not know. I am willing to suggest, however, that the copying of a good composition is one of the acceptable ways for the undergraduate to begin to do the critical reading and writing which I am recommending. And this right copying of another person's composition begins to be a critical activity as soon as the copier begins to notice seeingly the work he is copying, I mean, of course, that this copying begins to be critical work as soon as the copier begins to be aware of the original writer's intention; as soon as he begins to realize that the original writer selected certain materials to put together, and used certain ways and means of putting them together for the sake of fulfilling his intention as writer. And then this critical reading becomes a piece of critical writing as soon as the reader shapes on paper his intelligent response to the original composition.

There are a great many ways in which this kind of exercise in critical reading and writing may be carried on. A piece of Latinized exposition might be translated into a piece well-wrought of Saxon speech; a third-person narrative might be rewritten in the first person from the point of view of the principal person in it. The beginning writer might undertake with the help of the Oxford English Dictionary, or the Oxford American, to write a biographical sketch of a word which he has found interesting: he might explain why a dandelion is called a dandelion, or he might try to explain the meaning and the usefulness of a certain word in its particular context. For example, in the tenth paragraph of Hilaire Belloc's essay *The Mowing of a Field* there occurs this statement: "For . . . the mower Promethean, the mower original and contemptuous of the past, does all these things: He leaves great crescents of grass uncut . . .". Let the beginning writer read this essay, this paragraph, this sentence carefully enough to find out with whatever assistance he pleases just what Mr. Belloc is communicating by using the word *crescents* in this particular clause.

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Swiftian "Modest Proposals"

Professor W. L. Werner's trenchant "modest proposals," published in the *News Letter* last May, offer five significant propositions for the training of a young composition teacher. In general, they conform to what Miss Bethel Nelson describes in a recent number of the *Bulletin of the American Association of University Professors* (April, 1940) as a requisite for the ideal teacher of the liberal arts: first, "an adequate mind adequately trained"; second, the possession of a broad, general culture; and finally, a personality suited to the task. But a consideration in detail of the means proposed by Professor Werner to achieve these ends reveals disturbing basic assumptions and brings up disconcerting questions as well.

First of all, Professor Werner advises the prospective teacher not to concern himself with securing a Ph.D. because such study can serve only to disqualify him as a teacher of elementary composition. The contention that graduate work ordinarily gives meager preparation for the instructor in writing courses is scarcely open to question. Yet the supposition is plain: the young English teacher need never fear that the chairman of his department, the dean, or the president of the institution in which he may teach at any time in his career will indicate directly or even hint that he should preserve his status or obtain advancement by securing the degree.

Having cast aside the Ph.D., Professor Werner sets forth an alternate program. Although not so ordered, two of his proposals concern training through courses and independent reading, while the remaining two have to do with experience in professional writing.

To provide the necessary unity and diversity of intellectual background not possible in a pursuit of the doctorate, Professor Werner suggests that the candidate take four courses, one each in pedagogy, logic, philosophy, and the history of the language. The fundamental question here is whether these few elementary or basic courses will give the student power to synthesize, whether they will give him breadth and depth sufficient to develop for himself an intellectual outlook adequate to his needs and useful to him as human being and as teacher. In addition to formal courses, the prospective teacher should acquire a thorough reading knowledge of the great masterpieces of the literature of the world, "at present difficult to secure in regular college courses, because they are usually concerned with only the big fish of little periods, the weak links in 'evolutionary' chains, books (ordinary) about books (immortal), and mere nibbles at the great classics." Surely no one can doubt the cultural value to a member of any profession of familiarity with the truly great books. But does not Professor Werner assume that the intellectual and literary curiosity of the student who expects to teach is so inactive as to inspire him to read in college only those works required for course-credit? Is it probable then that so sluggish a mind could profit appreciably from any sort of voluntary reading program?

For training in writing, Professor Werner recommends that, after leaving college presumably, the candidate secure one or two years of work on a small newspaper, for newspaper experience only will enable him to cut his verbiage in half. Although there are many small newspapers, is it to be admitted that there will be sufficient opportunity for all young people otherwise qualified to achieve this kind of training? How many editors of such newspapers would willingly engage in the schooling of prospective college instructors—or is the young reporter to conceal his motive in seeking the job? Moreover, is it likely that even the moderately successful newspaper employee with one or two years of experience will be eager to resign in order to take up the teaching of college composition? Unless this conclusion is warranted, applicants for instructorships in composition will necessarily be those who have already proved their inferiority in this particular kind of professional wrting. Another sort of experience in writing sugested for the prospective composition professor is the securing of "a small amount of magazine publication, enough to make him conscious of diverse editorial requirements, enough to indicate to his students that teachers too can write." Once again troublesome questions arise. Are composition courses to prepare students for careers as professional writers, and is English composition to be taught, consequently, not as a craft but mainly as an art? Must the composition teacher recognize that the only competent critic is one who has achieved some success as essayist, fiction-writer, poet or playwright? Or is the magazine publication desirable principally to provide the teacher with dust for the eyes of his students?

A final, though perhaps primary, question remains—does the prospective teacher of composition wish (or should he expect) to teach writing courses exclusively?

If only a few of these inferences can be drawn, the program devised by Professor Werner can scarcely be considered the best possible means of securing suitable training for teaching composition, or the most readily acceptable criterion for judgment of a candidate's qualifications.

George Baldwin Shick,
Purdue University.

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Members are reminded that the *"News Letter"* is a forum open to all, and that any communication two or three hundred words in length is quite as welcome as a contributed article. Members show an increasing tendency to submit papers too long for inclusion, and a declining tendency to send in pertinent questions and stimulating comment.

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Undergraduate Critic

(Continued from Page 3)

Again, I think the undergraduate student of English would be glad to discover for himself that a great part of the meaning of Edith Wharton's *The Age of Innocence* is to be read out of the word *affability* as it occurs in a sentence saying that Mr. Van der Luyden greeted his callers with cousinly affability. It is possible to go on making suggestions of this kind, and it would be a good thing to work some of them out in the fullest possible way. This method derives from the French method of studying a text, the *explication de texte* method used in the French lycees and universities, but not used to any great extent, so far as I am aware, as a way of studying English composition and literature in this country. The shortest way for me to say what I am talking about here is to refer the reader to Professor Louis Cazamian's book *Criticism in the Making*, Chapter III, (Macmillan, 1929). I am glad to mention here also, for their kindred qualities, a few American books: *Understanding Poetry* by Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, *Intelligent Reading* by Edward A. Tenney, *Writing Through Reading* by Robert M. Gay.

The critical reading and writing I have prescribed for the undergraduate is no more than a few suggestions about how to make a beginning in the study of literature considered as one of the fine arts, a fine art dependent for its creation upon the conscious and skillful use of the techniques of writing. Then this critical writing does not preclude the undergraduate's doing creative writing, because insofar as his critical writing is subjective it will be creative. I believe it is possble to find ways of proceeding from the elementary criticism I have mentioned to the superior kinds of criticism; and if the teacher of composition and literature should be heterodox enough to suspect that the making of literature is even more admirable than the criticising of literature, why then I think he might discover ways of proceeding from critical writing toward that first excellency in letters, imaginative writing.

August H. Mason,
University of Alabama.

Free Association in Modern Poetry

(Continued from Page 1)

To which Nelson Rockefeller replies

"I owe a little to God and Grandpa,
And after all
It is *my* wall."

We'll see if it is," said Rivera.

As a personal foot-note, I added the comment,

And it seems to the quiet stander-aside
That when a man stands and thumbs for a ride
When the winter winds are blowing,
That the man who drives and paid for the car
Might be permitted as things now are
To decide which way they're going.

In struggling to show the class how very free free association may be, it struck me that quite unintentionally I had produced an example of it, for it may be argued that in these lines there is much more meaning than at first appears. Thus one might assert that they offer an excellent example of double association, and indicate that the writer possesses a distinctly split personality. This is first suggested by the term "stander-aside." That is, the ineffective liberal, whose mind sees first one side of the shield, then the other, and is unable to identify itself with either, and so remains socially sterile.

Without attempting to exhaust all the implications of the lines, let us consider some of the most suggestive words:

Thumbs, in 'thumbs for a ride." The word is richly associative. It suggests first of all the signal of the Roman populace in the amphitheatre, by which the fate of the gladiator was determined by thumbs up or thumbs down. The implication, though vague and half-formed in the billowing ebb and flow of subconscious thought, is that the indifferent drivers, representing society, have signalled "thumbs down" to the weary pedestrian who represents distressed labor. But while this association of the word is fairly obvious, the reader should note another very different interpretation. The thumb is the part of the hand essential to grasping. In the mind inevitably rises the image of the worker's hand grasping the hammer, emblem of the proletarian threat to grasp the means of production.

For a ride The expression is at once identified with the gangster phrase "taken for a ride." The surface idea-relation is the conception that the worker has been taken for a ride by capital; but beneath this idea, in the unplumbed stirrings of the precipitate of thought, exists the whole burning conception of the under-world, the helpless products of evil and oppressive social forces.

Winter winds, in "when winter winds are blowing." The word looks back at Shakespeare's "winter of our discontent," and suggests the wind of the rising social storm, of which the man who persistenly thumbs for a ride is the living symbol.

The man who drives and paid for the car. The car is obviously the social scheme, and the picture indelibly stamped on the mind of the indignant reader is that of the arrogant captain of industry, directing the organism of society that he has bought and paid for.

As things now are: These words contain sinister significance. As things now are, haughty capital may say which way we're going, but not for long — only until the thumbs come up, and the hammer comes down!

The complete meaning of the lines now appears. What seemed on the surface a hackneyed and trivial defense of the right of capital to determine its own direction, now reveals itself as a subtly concealed protest against the existing injustice of the social order. Thus by applying the principle of free association, the poet is enabled to extend his meaning to limits only defined by the activity of the imagination of the reader, thus imparting to the thought a richness that the writer himself did not originally contemplate.

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